

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)131

(Question Serial No. 1139)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Recently, there were discussions on whether rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) can be named as “salmon” as it belongs to the Salmonidae family, which includes the Atlantic salmon. Meanwhile, a local TV programme introduced grass carp “yu sang” (or raw fish) as a delicacy. The community is concerned about the food safety of freshwater fish sashimi. In this connection, please advise this Committee on the following:

- (a) Is there any legislation in place for regulating the sale of raw fish, sashimi and other uncooked aquatic or meat products for human consumption? Please provide information on the inspections conducted, prosecutions instituted or complaints handled in respect of such legislation in the past 3 years.
- (b) How were the enquiries or complaints about rainbow trout being sold as salmon handled in the past 3 years? What actions were taken by the Department?
- (c) Given that marine fish and freshwater fish reared in an uncontrolled environment or their products without proper treatment are susceptible to parasites, and consumption of uncooked aquatic products may pose the risk of parasitic infection, does the Department have any action plans (including law enforcement and public education) to discourage the public from consuming aquatic products not suitable for raw consumption?

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 1)

Reply:

- (a) The Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132) stipulates that any food for sale for human consumption in Hong Kong must be fit for human consumption. According to the Food Business Regulations (Cap. 132X) under the Ordinance, Chinese dish Yu Sang is specified as prohibited food. Also, the Regulations stipulate that, save with the permission in writing of the Director of Food

and Environmental Hygiene, no person shall sell restricted food items which include sushi, sashimi, oyster and meat to be eaten in raw state.

There was no prosecution relating to the sale of Chinese dish Yu Sang from 2016 to 2018. The numbers of inspections of food premises and prosecutions against the sale of restricted food items without permission from 2016 to 2018 are as follows -

	2016	2017	2018
Number of inspections to food premises	247 422	248 452	230 254
Number of prosecutions against sale of restricted food items without permission	21	18	22

- (b) From 2016 to 2018, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) had not received any complaint about rainbow trout being sold as salmon.
- (c) The Department will keep reminding the trade of the need to apply for appropriate food business licences or permits and implement a food safety plan for operating a food business to protect consumers' rights and health. The Centre for Food Safety of the Department has also been promoting public awareness of the risk of consuming raw aquatic products through various channels, including its website, Facebook and other publications. In particular, susceptible populations, such as the elderly, young children, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems, are advised to avoid consuming raw aquatic products.

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